

# CIA Detention Of 17 Cubans Laid to Mutiny

Seventeen members of the Cuban invasion force held in a Guatemalan detention camp for 11 weeks were there because they had participated in a mutiny, had refused to train, had threatened their officers or had been absent without leave.

This is the explanation given by The Washington Post in answer to a recent New York Times story revealing the incident.

In that story, Rodolfo Nodal Tarafa, one of the 17, said that the men were arrested because they opposed Cuban leaders backed by the Central Intelligence Agency. He said the men were threatened, handcuffed, kept in subhuman conditions, were called Communists, and forced to take lie detector tests at gunpoint.

Most of these points are being disputed here. Government officials say the men were arrested because they represented a threat to the security of the invasion force and to the efficiency of the operation.

## Facilities Held Good

It is said that the detention camp had better facilities than did some of the training camps. The camp, however, was located on the edge of the jungle and wild animals prowled outside the fences.

At the time the men were confined, it is reported here, the Cuban leaders thought that they were acting like Castro spies. There is no evidence to support that charge officials here say.

Many of the men were confined in February after a change in commanders at Camp Trax in northern Guatemala.

Of the 300 men in that camp, 230 asked to resign when Capt. San Roman, who had been an army officer under Fulgencio Bastista, was placed in command.

The story told here is that most of the men were soon persuaded to continue their training. The few who did not were then handcuffed and taken to the detention camp.

## Protected from Colleagues

One purpose of holding the men, it is said, was to protect them from their own colleagues. Cuban officers in command in the camp wanted to court-martial the men but agents of the CIA vetoed the plan because they felt the result would be immediate execution.

In addition to those involved in the mutiny, some men were put in the detention camp because they had gone AWOL. Reports here are that one man was picked up as he was entering Mexico and another arrested after he visited twice with a girlfriend who crossed into Guatemala from Honduras.

Officials here said that the 17 men who were held in the detention camp were the only ones among the Cuban force of about 1,000 who did not go through with their assignments. All other combat troops who were ordered to the beaches, including those who had first mutinied against San Roman and then gone back to training, actually landed.

## Most Unavailable

It was also pointed out here that most of the men who could testify about the activities of the 17, other than the

17 themselves, are now either dead or in Cuba.

It had been expected, it is said here, that once the invasion was a success and a free Cuban regime had been set up the 17 men would have been turned over to it for trial. But that day never came and the men were sent back to Miami after the invasion failed.

It also is denied that any of the men were forced at gunpoint to take lie detector tests. They were given such tests but it is stated that a successful test requires a cooperative subject.

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